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WESTERN INDIA.
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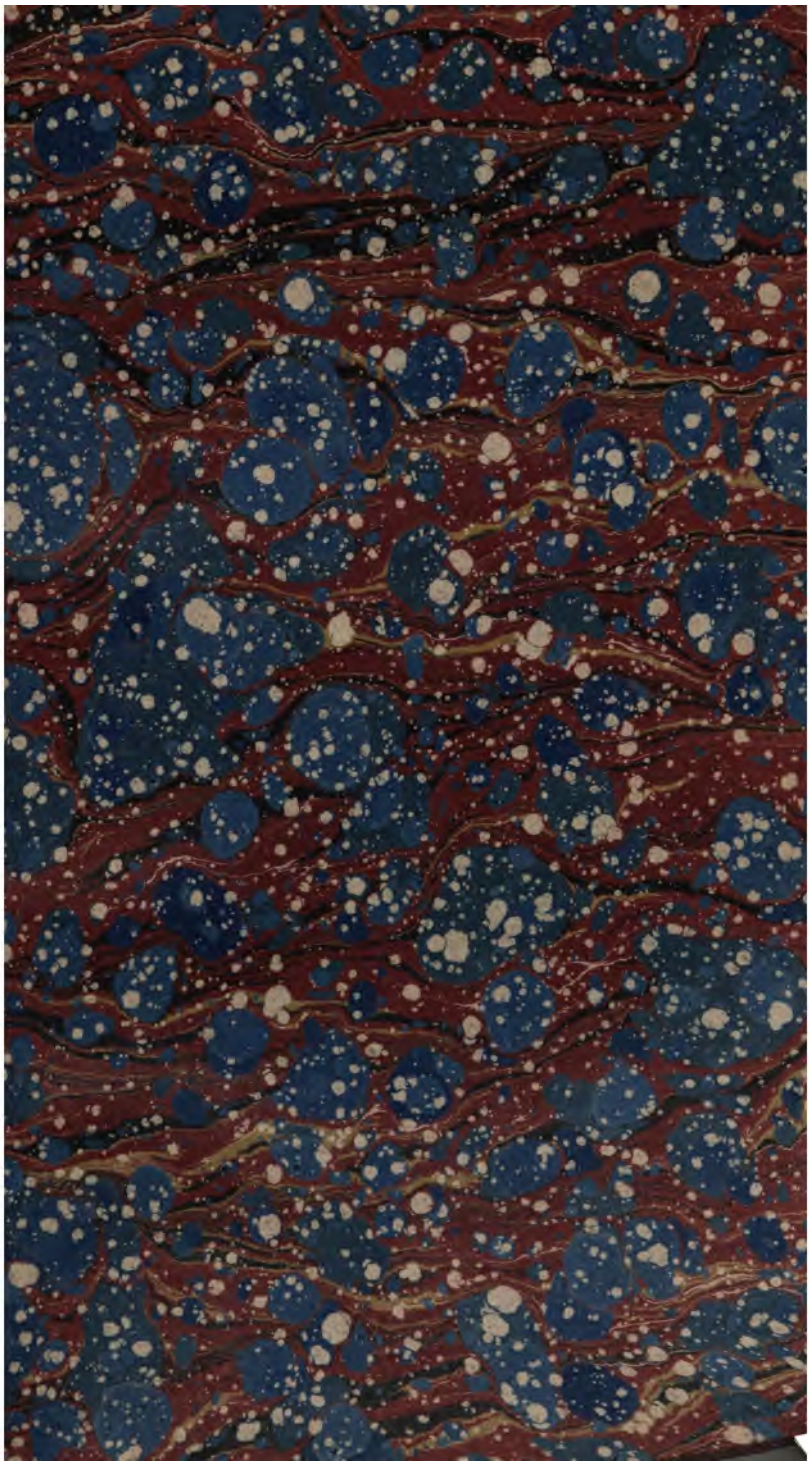

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TWO LETTERS

ON

THE ADVANTAGES

OF

RAILWAY COMMUNICATION

IN

WESTERN INDIA,

ADDRESSED TO

THE RIGHT HON. LORD WHARNCLIFFE,

CHAIRMAN OF THE GREAT INDIAN PENINSULA RAILWAY COMPANY,

BY

THOMAS WILLIAMSON, ESQ., C.S.,

LATE REVENUE COMMISSIONER, BOMBAY,

LONDON:

PRINTED BY RICHARD AND JOHN E. TAYLOR, RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

1846.

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THE following Letters addressed to Lord Wharncliffe by Mr. Williamson, have been published by the Orders of the Board of Provisional Directors of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway Company, with the view of directing public attention to the advantages which must inevitably accrue to the Government of India, no less than to individuals of all classes connected with that country, from the introduction of the system of Railway communication into the vast territories of our Indian possessions.

When we consider the extent of those possessions, and the distance intervening between the Capitals of the several Presidencies, it seems hardly possible to over-estimate the political and commercial benefits which must be the almost immediate

consequence of the introduction of such an improved mode of intercourse. The connecting these Capitals with the Districts dependent upon them will be the first step towards connecting them with each other, and giving new vigour to the general interests of the country. Science and skill and capital can be applied with as triumphant results in India as in England. On the Western side of the Peninsula the local investigations and surveys undertaken by the Provisional Directors have already shown that the Ghauts can be surmounted at an inclination which presents no real obstacle to the formation of the Company's projected line. These surveys and investigations will be completed in detail for the first 120 miles of the line, viz. from Bombay to Alleh, and generally for a considerable distance further, by the end of the ensuing month, when the Directors will be enabled to lay before the public such a report as they are confident will fully prove the practicability and profitable nature of this important undertaking.

May 18th, 1846,
3 New Broad Street.

GREAT INDIAN PENINSULA RAILWAY.

Military Importance of the Line.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD WHARNCLIFFE,

CHAIRMAN OF THE GREAT INDIAN PENINSULA RAILWAY COMPANY.

My Lord,

THE importance of the Railway we propose making has, I apprehend, in a military point of view, been very imperfectly understood by the community at large. Though not qualified to give an opinion professionally on the subject, there are some points on which my knowledge of the country may enable me to speak, and I trust, therefore, your Lordship will pardon me for bringing them under your notice.

I need not remind your Lordship that Bombay

is the great focus of our military strength in Westtern India. Its admirable harbour, at the most centrical point on the west coast of the Peninsula, has since the time of our first connection with India, pointed it out as the key of our possessions in this quarter. There are our Dockyards, our Arsenals, our Manufactories of Ordnance and other stores; and it is the only point on the whole coast where troops can, at all times of the year, be embarked and disembarked without difficulty or delay.

The sole drawback to Bombay, as a station for European troops, is, that the climate is less favourable than that of the high lands above the Ghauts; hence, as a depôt for European troops and a station for their permanent residence, Poona has been preferred. Here, in a healthy climate, which is shown by the returns of mortality to be nearly as favourable to the European constitution as that of Europe itself, a large body of European troops, including a regiment of dragoons, is constantly stationed, at once preserving the peace of the populous capital of the late Mahratta Empire, and ready to move in any direction in which their services may be required. Should they be wanted at Aden, in the Persian Gulf, on the Malabar coast, in Guzerat or in Scinde, a march of three or four days brings them to the shore of Bombay Harbour, whence

they may be transported, by a powerful flotilla of steamers, in any direction.

Should danger threaten, as it has so lately done, in the Southern Mahratta country, the Poona Brigade moves at once by Satara to the scene of operations, or moving on Sholapoor, it is ready to reinforce the troops which, at Hyderabad, the capital of the Nizam's dominions, curb the turbulent Arab and Patan soldiery of that imbecile prince. Moving on the line of Ahmednuggur and Aurungabad, troops from Poona can afford aid to the forces at Jaulna and Kamptee, and thus form a reserve to a force employed in the direction of Bengal or Bundelcund; or lastly, proceeding northwards, they can support the brigades at Malligaum or Asseerghur; reinforce Mhow (one of our largest military stations in Central India), or afford aid to troops in Gwalior, in Rajpootana, or in our north-western provinces*.

Its climate and position, therefore, must ever constitute Poona one of our most important posts on this side of India.

The importance of Sholapoor and Hyderabad has been incidentally noticed in speaking of Poona; besides its local value as commanding a wide extent

* For instance, in consequence of the want of troops in the north-western provinces, Her Majesty's 14th Light Dragoons, long stationed at Poona, have lately marched to the north-western frontier.

of frontier country, a strong brigade of every arm is, in a military point of view, absolutely essential at Sholapoor, to keep open the communication between Poona and the large force necessarily stationed at Hyderabad.

The possession of a strong fort, a very healthy climate, and other circumstances, have long constituted Ahmednuggur the head-quarters of the Bombay artillery.

Besides which, the troops there form an important link in the chain of communication which connects Poona and Bombay with Kamptee, the most centrical military position in the Peninsula, and the point where the great road from Bombay to Calcutta crosses the most important of those which run north and south through the Peninsula.

Jaulna, where a strong force is always situated, is the other great link between Ahmednuggur and Kamptee; it is one of the great advance stations of the Madras army.

At no great distance is Aurungabad, a large city, and important position in itself, but at present only occupied by the Nizam's own troops, though commanded by officers of the Company's army.

Taking a line north from Poona or Ahmednuggur, the first important military station is Malligaum. The brigade there, besides commanding the rich and important valley of Candeish, forms a link

connecting Ahmednuggur and Bombay with Asseerghur and Mhow.

The Beel tribes inhabiting the hills which surround Candeish, though now among the most peaceable and well-disposed of our subjects, must for a generation or two to come be watched by a competent military force in their immediate neighbourhood.

The almost impregnable mountain fortress of Asseerghur occupies a very important position between the valleys of the Taptee and Nerbudda, commanding a wide extent of wild and difficult country, inhabited by tribes who have only lately been taught submission to law. It is also of great importance as connecting Ahmednuggur and Malligaum with our stations on and near the Nerbudda.

Situated on the fertile table-land of Malwa, close to Indore, the capital of Holkar, once so dreaded as a Mahratta power, and enjoying an admirable climate, Mhow has always been one of our most important positions in Central India, and the station of one of our strongest brigades.

Besides its consequence as connected with our great military positions in the valley of the Ganges and its tributaries, a large body of troops may here be kept in a climate equal to that of any station in India, and ready to act as occasion may require, in the less healthy province of Guzerat, as a support

to the troops of Baroda, Ahmedabad, or Deesa, or in the direction of Rajpootana, should reinforcements be required at Neemuch or Nusserabad.

The above are the principal military stations, access to which from Bombay would be facilitated by our railway; and a reference to the accompanying map will show that, if railways were constructed with regard to merely military considerations, no better lines could be chosen than a great trunk-line from Bombay through Candeish to Nagpoor, with two branches above the great western Ghauts,—one leading south, in the direction of Poona and Sholapoor, the other north, in the direction of Mhow.

These, it will be observed, are precisely the lines which are most strongly recommended by purely commercial considerations.

The great trunk-line, running by the Malseje Ghaut in the direction of Nagpoor, would be the most direct which could possibly be selected to connect Bombay and Calcutta.

Commercially, it would be the best for the cotton of Berar, while for the first 120 miles from Bombay we would proceed in the immediate direction of the military stations of Ahmednuggur, Jaulna, and Aurungabad.

Any southern branch for the accommodation of the trade with Sholapoor and the South Deccan

must pass within a few marches of Poona: and in like manner any northern branch to Malwa must pass close to Malligaum, within a few marches of Asseerghur, and close to, if not through, Mhow. But it is not necessary to await the construction of all these lines in order to secure objects of the highest importance in a military point of view. Even seventy or eighty miles of the main line, from Bombay to the top of the Ghaut, would be most valuable.

In Europe, the importance of a railway as a military work is limited to the speed and comfort with which large bodies of troops may be conveyed to their destination; but in India its value is enhanced by the mode in which it would *spare the health* and *save the lives* of European troops.

On this point I shall be excused for entering somewhat in detail.

I need not observe that the heat during the warm season is much more severe and the rains during the monsoon much heavier in the Concan below the Ghauts than in the Deccan above them, and that all vicissitudes of climate are much more keenly felt by the raw recruit just landed from shipboard than by the seasoned soldier who has passed some years in India; added to which, the recruit just arrived has many temptations to intemperance, against which it is impossible to guard during a march

through the Concan, where the raw material of spirits* grows spontaneously in every jungle.

It is impossible always to time the arrival of European troops from England or Australia at the best season, the cool months. Should their arrival take place during the hot months, they must pass the Concan at a time when cholera is endemic in that province.

The temptations to indulge in drinking spirits or eating cold raw vegetable food, are difficult to resist, and their effect predisposes the body to attacks of cholera. I believe very few detachments of European troops march from Bombay to Poona or Ahmednuggur, during the hot months, without suffering more or less from this dreadful disease.

I may observe, that though more prevalent in the Concan, cholera very frequently attacks troops moving during the hot weather in every part of India.

During the late Kolapoor campaign, it broke out with great virulence among the European troops; and a late mail from India brought accounts of a similar visitation during the march of Her Majesty's 14th Light Dragoons from Poona to the north-west provinces.

* The Mowra Tree and the Palmyra or Toddy Palm, which afford the raw material for spirits, are indigenous in all the districts near this coast.

During the hot weather, all European troops, but especially inexperienced recruits who have not learnt the danger of exposure to the sun, are liable, besides cholera, to heavy loss from fevers, apoplexy, and "coups-de-soleil," the consequence of extreme heat.

Should the troops be forced to march from Bombay to the interior during the rainy months, they suffer nearly as much from a different class of diseases; constantly wet and forced to sleep in tents, where no care can keep their bedding dry, they contract malaria fever, rheumatism, and derangement of the bowels, which are speedily fatal, but more frequently leading to disorders which undermine the constitution, and render the soldier unfit for the active duties of his profession, shortening his life as surely as, though less speedily than, more acute forms of the disease.

I could instance a case where a batch of remarkably fine young recruits, who were obliged to march to Poona during the rains, were distinguishable from their comrades during the subsequent Affghan campaign by their liability to suffer whenever exposed to cold or wet; so effectually were their constitutions undermined, that the medical officers in charge of the regiment stated that after two years very few of the party in question were then fit for active service, in consequence of the shock the constitu-

tion of even the strongest had received from exposure, immediately on landing, to the incessant rains below the Ghauts.

I need hardly observe, that a railway to the top of the Ghaut would afford full protection from the inclemencies of both seasons of the year.

Instead of a detention of some days in the less favourable climate of Bombay, a voyage of four or five hours across the harbour and a march of at least two days through the Concan, and a very harassing journey up the Ghauts, the troops might at once be conveyed from the transports to the railway carriages, and in four hours would be in the healthy climate of the Deccan, without fatigue to themselves and entirely protected during their transit from either the burning sun or drenching rain.

The saving of human life and the increase of efficiency in the men would of themselves be a sufficient argument in favour of such a mode of transit; but setting aside all considerations of humanity, the mere pecuniary saving would be very great.

It is well known that every recruit landed in India costs the Company £110, which sum is considerably increased before he is dismissed from drill and fit for service, so that the saving of every single life becomes a matter of considerable financial importance.

Should an arrangement at any future time be concluded for the passage of troops through Egypt, the importance of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway would be vastly increased, for, as a glance at the map will show, it would then form a portion of the steam communication by which our troops would be most speedily conveyed from England to almost any part of India. And even with our present limited means of transport through Egypt, officers joining their regiments might often save many weeks in reaching their destination. This becomes a point of immense importance in any emergency, such as has twice occurred within the last four years, when all officers belonging to the army in India, and absent on leave in Europe, were by one order required to join their regiments without delay.

I remain,
My Lord,
Your obedient humble Servant,
(Signed) THOS. WILLIAMSON,
Late Revenue Commissioner, Bombay.

P.S.—During the recent Polish Insurrection, railways were found of great service to the Austrian army. The following is from a German paper:—"The late affair at Cracow has afforded an instance of the great benefits of railways for the speedy transport of troops and warlike stores to the scene

of operations; an Austrian corps of 921 men having been transported on the 3rd instant from Prague to Almutz, about 160 miles, in fourteen hours and a half; and on the 5th a body of cavalry of 1500 men, with horses and baggage, made the same journey in twelve hours, thus saving from eight to nine days."

(Signed) T. W.

GREAT INDIAN PENINSULA RAILWAY.

Importance of the Line to the Cotton Districts of Berar.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD WHARNCLIFFE,

CHAIRMAN OF THE GREAT INDIAN PENINSULA RAILWAY COMPANY.

My Lord,

In reference to the information our Board possesses, showing the importance of a Railway in Western India as a means of promoting the production of valuable articles of export from India, I would beg now more particularly to refer to the great staple commodity of cotton.

The trade in this article, at all times of importance to our home manufacturer, becomes doubly so at a moment like the present, when the state of our relations with America renders it by no means impossible that our cotton manufacturers may at any moment be cut off from the source whence their chief supply of raw material is at present derived.

But even in the event so greatly to be desired of a continuance of pacific relations with America, the Bombay cotton is threatened with very serious competition in its best market. The proximity of Bombay to China has for years given the Bombay cotton almost a monopoly of the Chinese market. I am informed that up to within the last two or three years, American cotton was rarely if ever seen in China. Low rates of freight, however, and other circumstances, encouraged some experiments on the part of American exporters about three years ago, and I am now informed on very high authority that American cotton bids fair to drive the Bombay cotton from the China market. Whatever, therefore, may be the state of our relations with America, it is clearly of the utmost importance to our Indian cotton market, to the great interests of this chief branch of British industry, and to the vast revenue derived by the East India Company from cotton lands in India*, that every

* The last mail brings further evidence of the depressed state of the Indian cotton market.

In the Bombay Price Current, a respectable authority, dated the 1st ult. (1 April, 1846), it is stated under the head of Cotton, "The market for this staple has been without animation, and in the absence of any active demand, prices have experienced a further decline." Stocks we understand are increasing rapidly, and the quality of Broach (the principal cotton district in India) cotton available is growing inferior.

facility should be afforded to the producer in India, to bring his cotton to market at the lowest possible cost.

I will not for the present allude to the immense resources which the interior of India possesses for extending the produce of cotton, if improved means for its export were provided. I will confine myself to pointing out the extent to which a Railway, such as we propose making, would facilitate the export of the cotton which is now produced.

Bombay is supplied with cotton from the following districts :—Katewar, Guzerat, Candeish, Berar, the western part of the Nizam's dominions, the southern Mahratta and Canarese countries.

The proportion may be roughly stated at one-third of the whole from Guzerat, rather more than one-third from Berar, Candeish and the Deccan, and the remainder from the other provinces.

In the event of Branch Railways being constructed in the direction of Sholapoor, the *whole* of the cotton trade of Bombay, with the exception of the portion belonging to Katewar and Guzerat, and that supplied from the Malabar coast, would be conveyed by the Railway.

The two branches in question need neither of them be of any very great length, and would both pass through countries tolerably free from engineering difficulties.

Both, however, are matters for ulterior consider-

ation, and I will at present restrict myself to the effect of a great trunk line running from Callian to the Malseje Ghaut, and through Candeish in the direction of Oomrawuttee.

The provinces, the cotton of which would chiefly benefit by such a line, are Candeish, Berar, and the Deccan, north of Sholapoor; all these provinces have many features in common.

First. The growth of cotton for export to Bombay is in none of them of the same antiquity as in Guzerat. It is a branch of industry which has grown up of comparatively late years, in consequence of the pacification of the country, of some improvement in the means of transport, and of increased provision of return-loads from the coast to the interior; and every circumstance connected with the trade tends to show that it is capable of a still further and almost indefinite extension.

Secondly. The extent of waste land capable of producing cotton, when compared with that which produces it at present, is very great in all the provinces enumerated.

Large as is the quantity of cotton now produced, the impression of a stranger travelling through Berar or Candeish would be that the country was very imperfectly cultivated.

Here and there he would pass large tracts of cultivated land, but he would also constantly travel through many miles of country, fully equal in

natural resources, but destitute of the population which had elsewhere converted the jungles into cultivated fields. He would also find, if he inquired into the history of villages, that a very slight encouragement was sufficient to attract cultivators, supplied with such scanty means as *there* sufficed for tillage, and that they greedily accepted terms which would be deemed hard by the most enterprising farmers in England.

His whole impression would be that a comparative trifling extension of the means now at work would greatly multiply the produce of the country, and that without any radical change of system, where the District Manager had given out waste land on easy terms, or where the village money-lender had advanced money for the purchase of stock, the same means would produce almost indefinitely the same effect, in bringing back to the villages, partly or entirely deserted, the cultivators whose forefathers had tilled their lands.

I do not mean to deny that European enterprise and ingenuity may not effect a vast improvement in the agriculture of India; but I feel convinced that if we were merely to follow up and increase the means which India now possesses for encouraging and improving the cultivation of waste lands, we might extend her agricultural produce to a degree which would hardly be credited.

European mechanical contrivances and European skill would probably effect in Asia as great a revolution as they have done of late years in England; but judicious leases, advances of capital, and, above all, moderate assessment, and other similar measures, not unknown to the natives in well-managed districts, the beneficial effect of which has been long placed beyond the reach of doubt, would of themselves, if generally adopted in the provinces above enumerated, lead to an increase of agricultural prosperity such as, I am confident, would astonish even the most sanguine.

These measures however belong rather to the province of Government, and I must return to a consideration of the facts which more immediately concern the Railway.

Thirdly. It is a characteristic of all the provinces in question, that the production and export of cotton are greatly limited by the want of a sufficient quantity of imports as a return from the sea-coast to the interior. The bullocks, which are now almost the sole means of conveying cotton from the interior to the coast, bring back English manufactured and other imported goods, and, above all, *salt* for the consumption of the inhabitants of the interior.

Now, it is evident that as long as the quantity of salt and other goods sent up from the coast equals

the quantity of cotton sent down, the expenses of transmitting the cotton to the coast will be limited to the expense of the journey *one* way; but if the quantity of cotton sent down exceeds the quantity of return goods sent up, the cost of conveying the excess will be equal to the expense of the journey both ways, since the bullocks which convey the excess down to the coast, must for want of return-loads go back empty.

It is clear therefore that if you can extend the consumption of imported goods in the interior, you will in a similar degree extend their powers of exporting cotton.

If you can get a native to increase his consumption of salt or of English or Chinese productions, you increase his power of sending down cotton.

I feel assured that no one acquainted with the interior will doubt the possibility of such increased consumption by the natives.

It is proved by statistical returns that the natives of the Deccan, 150 miles from the coast, consume per man only one-third of the quantity of salt consumed by the natives of the Concan, and there can be no doubt that in this one article of consumption alone, a reduction in the cost of carriage would be followed by a corresponding increase of consumption.

So with regard to English manufactured goods.

The quantity of English cotton goods now consumed in the interior, though large in itself, is *very* small when compared with the population. A few years since it was estimated at less than one yard per man per *annum*. The fact is, as every traveller in the Deccan knows, the male population is hardly *clothed at all* beyond what decency requires. This is far from being the effect of choice. Prosperity in a Deccan cultivator is invariably attended by an improvement in his clothing.

In Guzerat, where the cultivators are better off and clothing is cheaper, the agricultural population is almost as well clad as the same class in Southern Europe; and the natives in India, generally speaking, when able to command the means, are remarkably fond of show in dress.

There can, therefore, I think, be no doubt that if we can cheapen carriage, we may greatly increase the import of foreign articles into the interior; and in a corresponding degree, the export of cotton and other agricultural produce.

The fourth and last point to which I would advert as common to all the provinces mentioned, is the loss of interest on capital owing to the difficulty of conveying to the sea-coast the whole crop of cotton *before the monsoon sets in*. The cotton ripens earlier than near the coast, and even with the present most defective means of freeing it from the

seed, it is always ready to be sent down many weeks before the monsoon sets in. But where pack-bullocks are the only means of conveyance, a *single trip* to the coast is in itself an affair of many weeks; and the consequence is, that a large quantity of the cotton crop of every season is invariably warehoused in the interior, owing to the impossibility of sending it down to the coast till the commencement of the next fair season. I need not point out the loss which ensues to the owner of the cotton from this delay, in realising its price, as well as from the damage which the cotton often receives, when, as frequently happens, it is caught by an early monsoon, and is imperfectly and expensively warehoused on its way to the coast*.

I will now consider the mode in which a great Trunk Railway to Oomrawuttee would affect the cotton trade of each province.

Candeish.—The cotton of this province is generally grown in the eastern districts; it reaches the coast by two routes. Part proceeds down the valley

* Since writing the above, I have been informed by a very high mercantile authority long engaged in the cotton trade in the North-Western provinces, "that cotton, stored for the monsoon, loses at least one-fourth in value from the colour being injured, and the bagging in which it has been packed being rotted; in addition to which, the expense of storing, watching, interest of money must be added, making a difference of one-third at least, or the difference between a good profit and a heavy loss."

of the Taptee, by the Koondabaree-Ghaut and Soneghur to Surat, and is thence chiefly exported with the Guzerat cotton, and under the same name, by sea, to Bombay. The bullocks which convey it return laden with goods purchased at Surat, and salt, the produce of the neighbouring coast.

The whole of this cotton would find a much cheaper and easier mode of conveyance to the coast, by proceeding to join the Great Trunk Railway at any point in its course from Alleh to Berar.

The returns, in the shape of salt and imported goods, could always be obtained *cheaper* at Bombay and Bhewndy than at Surat.

The rest of the Candeish cotton at present proceeds by the Chandore and Unkyee-Tunkyee Passes to the Thull Ghaut, and thence by Bhewndy to Bombay. Certainly the greater part, probably every pound of this cotton would be more advantageously conveyed by joining the Great Trunk Railway at some point to the north of the Unkyee-Tunkyee Pass.

Berar.—The cotton of this extensive province reaches the sea by three main routes: a small portion proceeds *viâ* Candeish to Surat, and what has been said of the Candeish cotton adopting that route, will equally apply to the Berar cotton. The greater portion, however, according to the district in which it is produced, proceeds by various routes to either the Thull or Bhore Ghaut, which are at

present the only practicable breaches in the great barrier of the western Ghauts, and is thence conveyed to Bombay either *viâ* Bhewndy, or *viâ* Panwell. There can be no doubt that the *whole* of this cotton would come to the Railway as its shortest and cheapest mode of conveyance to Bombay, for the line of the proposed Railway lies directly through the rich provinces in which the Berar cotton is produced, passing *Oomrawuttee* and other great cotton marts, whence the cotton derives its name.

The Deccan, north of Sholapoor.—The cotton produced in this province, chiefly in the Nizam's dominions, reaches the Bhore Ghaut by various routes, much of it changing hands at *Barsee* or *Sholapoor*, whence it derives the name by which it is known in commerce. A great portion of it would be advantageously conveyed by joining a trunk line in the neighbourhood of *Joonere*. The *whole* would be secured by a short branch in the direction of Poona and Sholapoor.

There can be no doubt that the same may be said of much of the cotton grown south of Sholapoor in the Beejapoor and neighbouring districts, for even at present much cotton, tobacco, and other valuable produce reaches Bombay from the provinces in question *viâ* the Bhore Ghaut, but much also goes direct to the sea-ports in the neighbourhood of Goa, and thence coastwise to Bombay;

and to secure *this* trade a branch in the direction of Sholapoor would be necessary.

It may not be irrelevant to remark that cotton is the great staple export of Western India, and that by far the greater portion of the cotton exported from the East Indies into the United Kingdom comes from Bombay; a considerable quantity is grown in the upper provinces of Bengal; but I am informed on very good authority, that the quantity produced has greatly decreased since prices have fallen to their present low rates, and that if a great demand arose for exportation, cotton could not now be procured, as the produce hardly exceeds the country consumption. I may add, that the term "Surats" applied to East India cotton in the English market, affords a very erroneous index of its place of production. It is indiscriminately used to denote the Berar, Candeish, and all other cotton exported from Bombay.

I feel assured that the facts I have brought forward will not be without their interest to the Honourable the Court of Directors, the prosperity of whose revenue, and the security of whose possessions, are so intimately connected with the improvement of the means of internal communication in India. Subject to rivalry on all sides, the Indian cultivator cannot long command the means of paying his present revenue.

Something has doubtless been done of late years to assist him, but what has been effected is a mere trifle when compared with the vast amount of what remains undone.

Failure or partial success in one province is no argument against a repetition of experiments made under a more careful management or in a different locality. But there is *one* mode of promoting internal improvement which has been tried more or less in most provinces in India, and which I will venture to say has in no single instance been found to fail,—I allude to the improvement in the means of internal communication. As far as my experience in India goes, no road has ever been constructed without an immediate and almost magical effect on the prosperity of the town with which it communicates, and yet the extent of new road annually opened in the whole of the western presidency of India is not beyond what would be deemed requisite in a single county of England.

During the great number of years during which we have held possession of the country, the extent of made road along the great trunk lines of communication does not (exclusive of cross roads) exceed 350 miles, and these are very ill-furnished with cross lines of communication. The lines I allude to are as follows:—From Panwell, the port of communication with Bombay, in the direction

of Calcutta, and the great cotton district of Berar, the made road extends only to Ahmednuggur, a distance of about 150 miles, and has no branch in the direction of Sholapoor and Hyderabad.

The consequence is that the cotton which might travel the whole distance to the sea-coast, on carts along the made road, at the rate of six bullock loads on a cart drawn by two bullocks, twelve miles per diem, now creeps the greater part of the distance, six loads on six separate pack-bullocks, only eight miles per diem. As a proof on this new line of the effect of improving roads, I may mention the instance of the Bhore Ghaut.

When this pass was first made practicable to wheeled carriages about the year 1828, the toll realized between £400 and £500 a year. Twelve years ago a speculator was ruined by farming them from government for £1000. They now annually let at between £3000 or £4000 per annum, so that in four years, besides providing for the expense of annual repairs, the toll now more than covers the original cost of constructing the road.

The only other great trunk line in existence is that in the direction of Mhow, Malwa and Agra, of which I am told less than 200 miles have been finished, and this portion was not one year ago opened to wheel carriages. Small detached portions further on have been completed, but it is to-

tally unfurnished with branch roads in the direction either of Berar eastward, or Surat westward, though the traffic both ways is immense. It has in fact only one made cross road extending a few miles from Nassuck in the direction of Poona.

There are as yet but twenty miles of made road along the great line from Bombay in the direction of Surat, Baroda and Ahmedabad, and none beyond Poona or Satara in the direction of Madras. The local government has repeatedly recognised the importance of constructing all these lines even in a pecuniary point of view, for the benefits they would confer on the revenue are unquestionable; but some unforeseen obstacle has invariably started up to put a stop to measures, the beneficial effects of which have never, I believe, been made the subject of a single doubt.

I remain, my Lord,

Your most obedient Servant,

(Signed) T. WILLIAMSON,

Late Revenue Commissioner, Bombay.

20th April, 1846.

P.S.—The following interesting notes, showing how vastly cotton cultivation might be increased in Berar, by improving the present means of communication with that province, have been obligingly

sent me by Col. Ovans. They are the results of the practical experience of a highly respectable gentleman employed on the spot in the purchase of cotton.

These notes refer only to Western Berar, but might be justly applied to other extensive and fertile districts whose hitherto neglected resources have yet to be developed.

(Signed) T. W.

NOTES ON THE COTTON TRAFFIC OF WESTERN BERAR.

THE first batch of cotton sent from the mart of Khamgaum to Bombay through Candeish was in the year 1824–25, by an agent of Sir Jemsetjee Jeejeebhoy, named Goverdhun Vistnajee. The quantity was about 2000 loads.

In 1826–27 about 5000 loads were despatched by native merchants named Kurna Sunkur and Gopaljee.

In 1826–27 Runmal Sukla, then an eminent cotton-merchant of Bombay, came to Khamgaum in person to establish a regular and extended intercourse. The quantity sent by the above route

this year increased to 10,000 loads, and some thousand loads were also despatched by the Mhar Ghaut, *viâ* Moongeepeytun and Ahmednuggur to Panwell.

In 1827–28 two or three more adventurers resorted to Khamgaum from Bombay, and the road through Candeish for the transit of cotton became thoroughly established.

From that year to the present, 1845, the cotton trade of Berar has gone on increasing at a rapid rate, and in 1841, 42 and 43, from 70,000 to 80,000 loads, annually, were despatched from Khamgaum and the districts across the Poorna River through Candeish alone. A load is equivalent to about 240 lbs. avoir.

Besides the cotton exported to Bombay from the mart of Khamgaum and the Poorna districts, about 5000 loads were sent from above the Ghauts, and about 40,000 loads from Oomrawuttee, Bassein, Karinja, &c. in Eastern Berar, by the route of Moongeepeytun, Nuggur and Panwell. From Oomrawuttee, &c. about 40,000 loads were forwarded to Mirzapoor on the Ganges, making a grand total of from 155,000 to 160,000 loads of cleaned cotton exported into the Honourable Company's territory, annually, for shipment to Great Britain and China. The year 1844 and the present one of 1845 have not proved favourable from want of sufficient rain, and the produce has been less in proportion.

If properly managed and encouraged, there is every reason to suppose that this important branch of commerce will go on increasing at a steady pace.

The soil throughout the greatest portion of the province is uncommonly rich and fit for the cultivation of cotton. In fact it is a cotton-growing country. The only obstacles which exist to the almost unlimited production of the staple are, primarily, the difficulty of transport from the place of cultivation to the Bombay market, and secondly, the mismanagement of the country under the Nizam's Government.

To give an idea of the extent to which the first of these at present operates, it is necessary to state that the price of transport amounts to from 5 to 8 rupees per bullock-load, between Khamgaum and Bombay; or allowing 3 bullock-loads to the candy of 784 lbs. avoir., to 15 to 24 rupees per candy. Taking the price of cotton at say 20 rupees per load, or 60 rupees per candy, it will give about an average of 32½ per cent. upon the first cost. But this is not all. The time occupied on the route between Berar and Bombay is very great. A laden bullock travels only at the rate of from six to nine miles a day, and often from lameness, fatigue, and other causes, is obliged to remain stationary for days together. About sixty days therefore are required to effect the transit between the place of cultivation and the

coast; and as the cotton of Berar does not appear in the local market much before February, and is not all cleaned and prepared before April, it requires the utmost exertion to bring any portion of it to Bombay previous to the setting-in of the south-west monsoon; while it almost invariably happens that large quantities are caught on the road by the rain, and if not destroyed, are greatly damaged by becoming wet, mouldy, and black. Besides, in such cases numbers of the cattle used for transport are killed from overwork, as in addition to the anxiety felt to push them on to the utmost to avoid the effects of the rain, the cotton with which they are laden, from absorbing quantities of moisture, becomes double its original weight, and actually crushes the animal to the ground. It frequently happens therefore, owing to this and other causes I have mentioned, that hundreds of their carcases are to be met with just previous to the monsoon, strewed along the paths they have traversed.

All this however may be easily improved. The natural and obvious remedy is a good road for wheel carriages. At present very indifferent ones exist in Berar and in Candeish as far as Chandore on this route. From Chandore to the top of the Thull Ghaut there is a very good made road. The great obstacle is the Thull Ghaut itself, which is very difficult of ascent and descent; but a new level has been

marked out and partly finished, which will render it much easier. From the bottom of the Ghaut to Kuchlee-bunder the made road is very passable; still in some places it requires considerable levelling. A good road for wheel-carriages should be made from Khamgaum to Chandore or Malligaum in a direct line. The rude carts of the country upon ordinary and very imperfect roads travel at the rate of nineteen miles a day, and a cart with two bullocks conveys four loads.

The effects which improving the means of communication in this way would have upon the trade of Western India are almost incalculable*.

Nor is it in cotton alone that an improvement of this kind would take place. Every description of raw and bulky produce, such as salt, hemp, linseed, dye-stuffs and hides, suffers in an equal degree by the present state of things, the effect of which in many cases may be estimated as doubling their price between the place of cultivation and the sea-coast, where a large market for them alone exists.

* These remarks were written by the author before he had been informed of the Company's projected undertaking; but if they are conclusive as to the advantages to the productive resources of the district to be derived from the improvement of the common modes of communication in the country, what unqualified testimony do they not bear to the prospective advantages of that most improved of all modes of communication—a Railway!

It may be useful just to remark in this place, that there are two descriptions of cotton grown in Berar, the one called Bunny and the other Jurry. The first comes in in November and December, and the latter in December and January; but owing to the want of hands, and other field occupations, but more especially revenue arrangements, the wool is not gathered as early and as quickly as it might and ought to be, in order to secure its fairness of quality. It thus happens invariably that a large portion of it falls to the ground, and the remainder in pulling is mixed up with the dried and broken leaves.

On the 16th of February 1843, three samples of cotton which had been damaged by rain and hail-storm, were submitted by me to the Resident at Hyderabad, explaining at the same time that it was owing to the ryots not being allowed to gather and house the seed-cotton in time, that this injury had been caused. The quantity thus more or less damaged was estimated at 40,000 loads, equivalent to 9,600,000 lbs. avoir. In submitting those samples for the inspection of the Nizam's Government, I pointed out that No. 1 would sell in England at about 4*d.* the pound; this had been gathered before the hail-storm and rain. No. 2 would fetch scarcely 3*d.*; this had been partially damaged: and No. 3, which had been beaten down and drowned,

would be scarcely worth anything. This needs no comment.

The process of cleaning the cotton from the seed is by the "churkha" (hand-wheel), but it is effected in the most negligent manner, and often the cotton is purposely placed on unswept or unplastered floors, in order to allow the dust and earth to mix with it, to add to the weight. Old and bad cotton too is sometimes put into the bale, and stowed away in the midst of it; but the most crying evil is not extracting the seed completely from the wool. There is no help for all this, nor will there be any until a proper police is established in the country.

I shall now conclude by merely alluding to the detention and impediments caused by the farmers of transit duties in the Nizam's country. Sometimes their demands are exorbitant, and if not satisfied, the cotton is stopped in its progress for days together. In 1841 some ten thousand loads were thus detained so long, that they could not be sent on to the coast that season. It had to weather out the whole of the south-west monsoon here. The loss to the owners was ruinous.

(Signed) R. H. FENWICK.

Khamgaum, 25th December, 1845.

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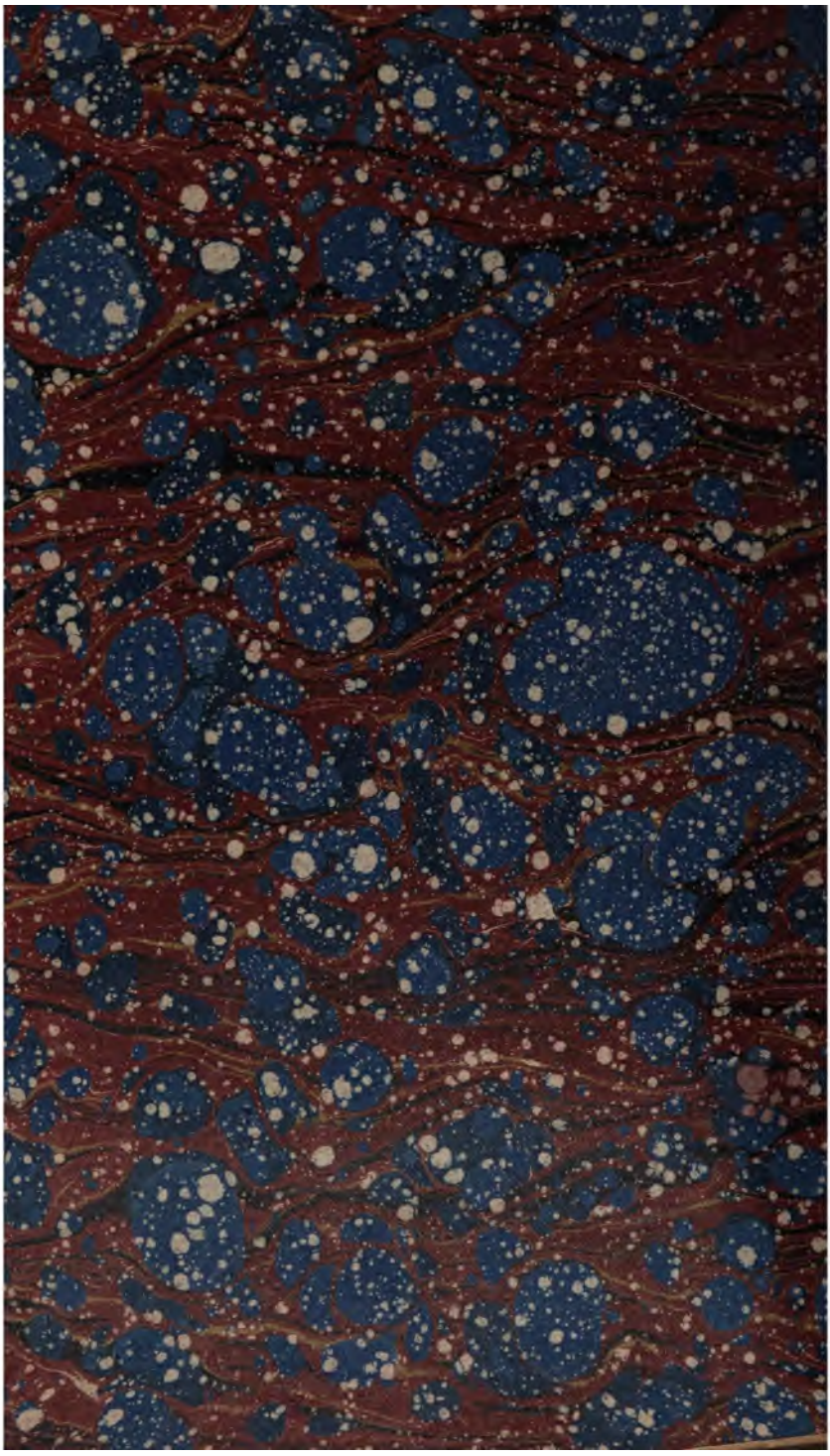
Gr. Ind. P. R.



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